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## Notes

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[Contributions in the form of notes or discussions should be sent to John A. Scott, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.]

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### MR. MAURY ON ACHAIA GREECE

Professor Scott has invited me to comment on Mr. Maury's article in the *Classical Journal* for April, 1917, "The Leaf-Ramsay Theory of the Trojan War"; and I accept the invitation with pleasure, the more because Mr. Maury writes from that full acquaintance with Homer and with that fairness of tone which are the best guaranty of profit from discussion. No one can be more willing than I to recognize the disputable nature of the ground on which we have to speculate when we come to deal with the remote and mysterious Homeric age; and I welcome criticism such as Mr. Maury's as far more likely to advance knowledge than any unquestioning acceptance of the newest theory of the moment. In what I have to say I shall try to confine myself briefly to certain fundamental assumptions in which I differ wholly from Mr. Maury.

Let us begin, then, with Mr. Maury's denial that there was in Homeric Greece any "typical economical pressure," leading him to the conclusion that there was no desire for expansion. By "typical" he seems to mean pressure arising from poverty. My own view, which I have expressed at some length in *Homer and History*, pp. 288 ff., is very different. The economic pressure which leads to the impulse for expansion is, in my view, an overflow of vitality, a desire for betterment, which requires as its base prosperity at home. This may seem a paradox, but can be abundantly proved from history. All the praise that Homer bestows on Greece, which Mr. Maury sketches on p. 460, can be paralleled and indeed outdone by what Shakespeare says of "this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England." Would Mr. Maury conclude that we are mistaken in thinking that in Shakespeare's age Drake was leading the fight for the capture of the trade to the Spanish realm in America, that Raleigh was founding Virginia, and Chancellor opening up Russia and founding Archangel? Possibly Mr. Maury has not read what I have said in *Homer and History*, so I may perhaps venture to ask him to reconsider this point.

Another assumption which Mr. Maury seems tacitly to make, but which I must traverse, is that commercial expansion is synonymous with overseas colonization. He says that there was no commerce on the Black Sea until long after the Homeric age, because there is no evidence of the founding of colonies there until the eighth century (p. 462). I should be inclined to reverse the argument, and to say that the existence of Greek colonies there in the eighth century was presumptive evidence of a long period of commerce to prepare the way. Think of the extent of nearer lands which the Greeks had to fill up with colonies before they could think of going so far afield! When the

veil begins to lift in the ninth and eighth centuries, we find not only Lesbos, Miletos, and all the western coast of Asia Minor full of Greek colonies, but Sicily and southern Italy rapidly passing into their hands; Cumae, according to the chronographers, was founded about 1050 B.C., though of course one takes such statements with all reserve. It was not until these colonies had had time to overflow in their turn that the remote regions of the Euxine could be sown with Greek cities. But this does not exclude—on the contrary, it implies—a long period of active commerce. The process, as I take it, was a very gradual one; first, visits by particularly daring adventurers in casual voyages, bartering goods with the natives wherever it was found that a landing could be safely made; then the slow organization of trade by the foundation here and there of “factories,” isolated trading posts where the inhabitants were friendly, or at least tolerant; and only as the pressure of population grew at home would these be developed into permanent settlements, and the women and children established in them. I see no reason why these processes should not have covered several centuries. Nor should I for a moment expect that such prosaic and almost imperceptible stages should find mention in “the great dramatic and lyric poets of Greece in their known works” (p. 465). The poets had plenty of material at hand, more useful because more exciting, and played out under the eyes of those for whom they wrote. I do not think that we could find out from them much about the original colonization of Magna Graecia.

Mr. Maury says that “the Homeric Greeks are not hardy sailors generally” (p. 461). Should not the epithet rather be “foolhardy”? They were not conditioned by physical circumstances; all that he says about their ships is true and is universally recognized. But it is, at least in the greatest measure, true not only of Homeric Greeks, but of Greeks in all the historic period. Mr. Maury thinks that the hesitation of some of them to risk the direct passage from Chios to Euboea (p. 168) is a sign that they were cowardly or incapable mariners. Let us remember that, according to the tradition, Troy was taken ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν,<sup>1</sup> at the end of October, that is, when the winter storms might set in at any moment. And then let us compare their anxieties and fortunes with those of a far more famous voyage which took place about the middle of the first century A.D., many hundreds of years later, and see the risks which had to be faced.

“A ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy” found itself, in or about the year 62 A.D., at a port in Crete called The Fair Havens. It was the same season of the year “when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past.” The haven was not commodious to winter in, and it was decided, after consultation and hesitation, like that of the returning Achaeans in Chios, and against the protest of the most celebrated of the passengers, to venture on the run to Phenice (Φοινίξ), a harbor about 40 miles away, barely half the distance

<sup>1</sup> Aesch. *Agam.* 817. The date is not explicitly named in Homer, but the whole narrative of the νόστοι, particularly γ 130-92, implies that the dangerous season had begun.

from Chios to Euboea. The voyage began prosperously; but "not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon" or Euraquilo; and, as we all know, the result was a shipwreck on the coast of Malta. It seems to me that, if the Achaeans "are not hardy sailors," precisely the same must be said of their successors 1,200 years later; and if in the one case the conclusion is to be drawn that the Homeric Greeks were not good enough sailors to reach the Euxine, and therefore, in fact, never did so, the same deduction is imperative not only for the Greeks of the historic age, but even for the Romans, which is absurd.

The amazing fact remains that, whatever we may say, and say with all truth, of the poorness of their means, the Greek sailors of every age "got there all the same." Instead of taunting them with not being hardy, it would surely be more just to apply to them Horace's phrase, "robur et aes triplex circa pectus erat." Only the Achaeans were not the first to commit the fragile cockleshell to the savage sea. Large overseas expeditions were, in fact, the order of the day when the Achaeans first appeared; in one of these at least there is reason to suppose that the Achaeans had taken part, invading Egypt in force a generation or two before the attack on Troy—for this I may perhaps refer to *Homer and History*, pp. 39-42. That a people who were capable of doing this or even of merely invading Troy should be judged too feeble or too cowardly to penetrate into the Euxine when they had seized the entrance to the Hellespont seems to me an impossible piece of logic, and I cannot for a moment accept it.

In fact, Mr. Maury's whole view of the sea picture presented in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* fairly makes me gasp. He seems to regard the Homeric Greeks as a quiet stay-at-home folk, quite content with the fatness of their "deep-soiled Phthia" and unwilling to trust themselves to the sea at all. He speaks of their "natural backwardness as sailors" (p. 462); the *Odyssey* is "peculiarly largely a book of compulsory travels," and so on. I can only say with regret that I am utterly unable to enter at all into this point of view, which is entirely new to me. To me it seems that the whole atmosphere of both poems is one of maritime daring. The very conception of a naval expedition to Troy is only thinkable for a people whose "march is o'er the mountain-waves, whose home is on the deep." Until I learn that there are others who share Mr. Maury's view, I need not perhaps do more than ask him to re-read those charming and invaluable vignettes of Aegean life, the various feigned narratives of Odysseus scattered through the *Odyssey*. Take one—that which is told to Eumaeus in § 199 ff. What does Odysseus there say of his life in Crete?

ἔργον δέ μοι οὐ φίλον ἔσκεν  
οὐδ' οἰκωφελίη, ἣ τε τρέφει ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,  
ἀλλὰ μοι αἰεὶ νῆες ἐπήρετ' μοι φίλαι ἦσαν . . .  
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Τροίης ἐπιβήμεναι νῆας Ἀχαιῶν  
εἰνάκις ἀνδράσιν ἦρξα καὶ ὠκυνπόροισι νέεσσιν  
ἀνδρας ἐς ἀλλοδάπους, καὶ μοι μάλα τύγχανε πολλά.

So in all the other stories—they all have their tale of sea venture. Or take the question asked of seafarers when they arrive unheralded, “Are you merchants or pirates?” Does not that include in itself a comprehensive picture of life in Homeric Greece? Piracy is no doubt regrettable, but at least it is the very acme of maritime adventure.

But I cannot dwell at more length on so well-worn a theme. I will only point to one remark of Mr. Maury’s—“Homer is consistent: No ship is portrayed upon the Shield of Achilles.” The point has of course been taken before, but in the exactly opposite sense. The omission, it is always said, is in such glaring contradiction to the whole picture of Homeric life that we must suppose Homer to have been describing some foreign work of art fabricated by people who knew not the sea.

And there I fear that I must leave the point at issue to the judgment of others. To me, Homer is full of the sea; his men are bold adventurers; if they are able to conduct a naval expedition to the mouth of the Hellespont and overthrow a fortress there, they are men to whom it would be a trifle to work their way up the narrow seas until they opened a new world in the Euxine. If they were men who were content to stay on the mainland of Greece and till the soil without troubling about the sea except under compulsion, then they must have lived under economic conditions which have never been found again in Greece in all history, and at which, considering the nature of the land, I cannot even guess.

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#### THE LEAF-RAMSAY THEORY OF THE TROJAN WAR

I am indebted to Mr. Leaf, who has sent me his copy of the *Classical Journal* for April, 1917, with an article by Mr. C. A. Maury on “The Leaf-Ramsay Theory of the Trojan War.” I understand from Dr. Leaf’s letter that he has sent some reply to this article. I wish to mention that the title might seem to imply co-operation between Dr. Leaf and myself, which is not the case; and I venture to add a few brief notes. But in the first place let me welcome Mr. Maury to the pages of the *Classical Journal*. He is in himself a proof of what I have always maintained, that the study of Greek is strong enough to stand and to exercise a wide influence without extraneous support. For maintaining this and for standing apart from classical defense associations and societies, on the ground that they are signs of weakness rather than of strength, I have been for forty years regarded by many enthusiastic and well-meaning classicists as a traitor to the cause of the classics and as an outlaw. My view, I am glad to say, is not now quite so much abominated in classical circles of Great Britain as it was forty years ago, or even twenty years ago.